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TITLE: Policy Implications of HIV Prevention Capacity Needs of African American Communities

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The much recent call for the Federal State of Emergency for African American Communities in HIV/AIDS, has spearheaded a surge of heightened interest in the policy and programming implications of African American CBO's, ASO's, and the larger American AIDS movement.

The emergency strategies to address this issue have been immediate and greatly needed. Tracing the historical perspective from beginning to the monumental program and intervention phase, assists programmers, policy analysts, advocates and workers on the front lines of HIV/AIDS in understanding the cofactors in assembling community leaders to (1) create an action plan stocked with their own solutions to the challenge; (2) garner support both within their specific communities and those immediately surrounding; (3) develop effective strategies for capacity building, advocacy and information transfer; (4) work collaboratively with local and state health department and funding sources; and (5) to document lessons learned and the challenges addressed.

- Some basic principles to compliment this initiative include:
- The most effective action on HIV/AIDS is by local people at a local level
- African American ASO's need a diverse range of skills and resources to respond effectively to HIV/AIDS
- Building capacity requires attention to technical and organizational systems
- Capacity building should be judged by its contribution not only to quality interventions, but also to a sense of ownership, and appropriate population coverage.

Though there is much energy and attention directed at this issue, specifically this distinct target population, the larger context of this response lends a useful framework to be utilized and modified for other communities of color. As this particular landmark point in question continues to manifest from the dialogue to action, the opportunity for cross fertilization of social, economic, psychological indicators and strategies may become adjoining landmark stakes in this movement.

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